

SUMMER
2005



THE FLAP

NEWS FOR THE FOLKS OF LAKE ACCOTINK PARK
WWW.FAIRFAXCOUNTY.GOV/PARKS

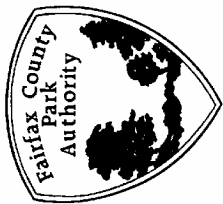


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THE OTHER HERON: LAKE ACCOTINK PARK'S GREEN HERONS

If you silently canoe near the island on the lake one morning, you may be afforded the rare privilege of seeing one of Lake Accotink Park's quieter residents hunting for its meal: the green heron.

Green herons, sometimes called green-backed herons are the smallest of North American herons. They range in size from about 16 to 22 inches long and have a wingspan of about two feet -- approximately the same size as the more common crow. Green herons have gray-green or gray-blue backs and wings, dark heads, chestnut colored chests and orange or yellow legs. Their necks, which are usually kept close to their bodies, are actually quite long and have 15-17 vertebrae.

After wintering in Central America, green herons return north to nest and spend the summer. The male chooses a nesting spot and then attempts to attract a mate with his nest

site choice and elaborate visual displays. Male green herons will swell their throat, make calls and hop from one foot to the other in an effort to attract a female.

Herons nest in marshes, swamps or other aquatic environments to be near their



Green herons, *Butorides striatus*, are North America's smallest heron. They nest near marshes, swamps and ponds.

food source. Nests are unlined and are made of sticks and twigs in trees, shrubs or other vegetation. Females typically lay between two and seven eggs between March and mid-June. Both herons tend the nest and help incubate the light green or blue eggs. They

will also both help feed the chicks after they hatch.

Green herons feed on a wide variety of aquatic animals, which allows them to subsist near smaller bodies of water better than their larger cousin, the great blue heron. They feed mainly on fish, frogs and crawfish, but will also eat insects and sometimes mice.

One of the most peculiar traits of the green heron is its ability to use "tools" to fish. Green herons will try feathers, worms, insects or broken twigs as "lures" for fish. This is one of the few examples of tool-making by birds.

Green herons are generally solitary birds and tend to be wary. They are most often spotted taking flight with a loud "skeow" after being startled.

For birding tips, see page 3.

Source: www.birds.cornell.edu

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, LAKE ACCOTINK PARK!



What is now Lake Accotink was called the Springfield Reservoir when it was created by damming the Accotink Creek in 1918 to provide a safe, stable water source for Fort Bel-

voir (then Camp A. A. Humphreys). It served this purpose for more than 40 years before Fort Belvoir switched to public water for its water source. The Fairfax County Park Authority be-

gan leasing this future parkland from the federal government in 1960. With Lake Accotink no longer needed as the water source for Fort Belvoir, the FCPA was free

(Continued on page 2)

Lake Accotink Park Marina hours of operation are on page 2.

*(Happy Birthday, Lake Accotink Park
cont'd. from pg. 1)*

to use the land as a recreational resource for the community. Public boating facilities and a concession stand were soon added. In 1965, the FCPA was able to purchase the land for half price -- \$88,250 -- under the federal Land-To-Parks program. Although the Lake Accotink Park of today looks very different from the park of the 1960s, it has remained a favorite recreational resource for the community for 45 years.

Help Lake Accotink Park celebrate its birthday this July 1-4 with Stars-and-Stripes Summer Fun Days -- a week-end of special deals on summer fun.

- All one-hour canoe and rowboat rentals and half-hour pedal boat rentals are just \$4.
- The 4th player in your group plays for free at the Lucky Duck Miniature Golf Course.
- The 4th person in your group rides the carousel for free.

- Play the carousel "wheel of fortune." If your horse stops on the No. 4, you win a prize.

- 4th Hole Challenge-- Get a hole in one on hole four and win a free carousel ride.

Stop by the Witness to History exhibit at the main office to view some photos of the park in the 1960s. Find out what the small pavilion used to be and where boats were launched.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU



Lake Accotink Park staff would like to thank all of the volunteers who braved the weather on Saturday April 2 from 9-noon and participated in Lake Accotink Park's Save-The-Bay Workday. The clean-up was also part of the larger Adopt-A-Highway and Adopt-A-Stream programs and the Alice Ferguson Foundation Potomac River Watershed Cleanup.

Despite the rain and wind, approximately 100 volunteers from neighboring civic associations, area high schools and church and scout groups showed up to help remove trash from the lake, creek and trails. Over 320 bags of trash were collected. The cleanup day was a huge success thanks to the hard work and generosity of all of the volunteers.

SUMMER MARINA HOURS BOAT RENTALS, CAROUSEL, AND MINIATURE GOLF

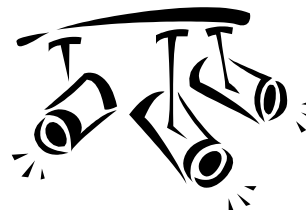


**THROUGH JUNE 26: WEEKENDS ONLY
11 AM - 8 PM**



**JUNE 27 - LABOR DAY: OPEN DAILY
11 AM - 8 PM**

Braddock Nights



Free Summer Concert Series

Fridays at 7:30 pm June 3-August 26

At Lake Accotink Park

June 3: Fall Church Concert Band (Big Band)

June 10: Swing Shift (Swing)

June 17: Itnmiray Band (Andean Music)

July 1: Oklahoma Twisters (Country Western)

July 8: Sultans of Swing (Swing)

July 15: Fairfax Symphony "Summer Band" (Classical)

July 22: Mariachi Los Amigos (Mexican)

July 29: Annandale Orchestra (Pop)

August 5: Randy Barrett (Folk/Bluegrass)

August 12: United States Navy Band (Sea Chanteys)

August 19: "Alt Washingtonia" (Bavarian Folk Dance)

August 26: City of Fairfax "Alte Kameraden German"
Band (German)

10 FUN SUMMER THINGS TO DO AT LAKE ACCOTINK PARK



abound at Lake Accotink Park. See page 3 of this newsletter for information on how to get started birding.

2. Bring your driver's license and rent a canoe or rowboat and enjoy a leisurely hour on the placid waters of Lake Accotink. Perhaps you will be lucky enough to spot a green heron.

3. Challenge your friends and family to a miniature golf tournament. Lake Accotink Park's Lucky Duck Miniature Golf Course features nine double-cupped greens. The first round is \$3.50

1. Learn a new hobby and find new ways to enjoy the natural resources that

for adults and \$2.50 for children 12 and under. The second round is \$1.50.

4. Take a day off from work and visit the Witness To History exhibit at the main office. Learn who used Lake Accotink Park before it was a park.

5. Enjoy the nightlife. Sign up for a Nature Night Hike or a Full Moon Cruise. See the calendar of events for more information.

6. Have a picnic. There are always tables available in the first come, first served picnic area or for a larger gathering, call the picnic registration line at 703-324-8732 to rent a covered shelter.

7. Take a hike! Start Lake Accotink Park's 3.75 mile loop trail at the marina and enjoy a leisurely walk through the woods.

8. Or grab your bike! Lake Accotink Park's loop trail is a multi-use trail and is ideal for young bicyclists. (And those who haven't been on a bike in a few years!)

9. Attend a Braddock Nights concert. You'll be treated to an evening of great music and a gorgeous sunset- all for free!

10. Just relax and enjoy spending time with family and friends in the sun. But don't forget your sunscreen!

GET STARTED BIRD WATCHING:



SOME HOW TO'S



Bird watching is one of the fastest growing hobbies in the United States. Lake Accotink Park is a great place to hone your bird identification skills. To get started with this engaging pastime, check out some of tips below:

1. Choose a good beginner's field guide. You may want to choose one with easy to see colored photographs. Make sure your guide is specifically written for your region. This way, you will only have to worry about learning to identify birds you might actually see. Read over it and become familiar with the birds that inhabit your area.
2. Choose a pair of binoculars you are comfortable using. Larger lenses allow more light to enter the binoculars, which keeps the image from being too dark, but binoculars with larger lenses can often be heavy and uncomfortable to carry. Make sure you try your pair out before you buy them.
3. Finally, practice! Get as much experience as you can identifying birds. You can join a local organization or go on excursions yourself and see how many different species you can identify. Try to answer some of the following questions: What are its body proportions like? What are the bird's most notable characteristics? Does it have a distinctive beak or coloration? Does it sit vertically with its tail pointing downward or horizontally with its tail outward? In what kind of habitat is it?


Bald eagles frequently hunt at Lake Accotink Park.




Throw Your Pooch a Party!



\$75 per package

 **Two hour tent space rental**

 **One hour private dog cruise**

 **Games for guests**

Call 703-569-0285 for info

Check-It-Out:

Catch up with the new and exciting things going on at Lake Accotink Park!

Have you heard... Assistant Manager, Julie Tahan, and Operations Manager Lee Ann Shenefiel were both awarded the Director's Leadership Award for promoting the Fairfax County Park Authority's value of enhancing stewardship? Ms. Tahan was honored for her research and work on an informational brochure promoting healthy watersheds. Ms. Shenefiel was honored for her work on the Witness to History: The Lake Accotink Park Story exhibit and interpretive materials.

Make sure you notice... the new landscaping around the miniature golf course. Ed Miller and Ken Fulling, two members of the park's maintenance staff, have put countless hours into landscaping and mulching the flower beds.

And while you're at the marina... Check out the work that has been done on the butterfly garden in the center of the traffic circle. The garden is maintained by members of the Ravensworth Farm Civic Association.

Are you wondering... what the "We Give A Hoot" bulletin boards at the snack bar and main office are all about? The bulletin boards help promote the Park Foundation's fundraiser. The Park Foundation raises money to fund projects in support of the Fairfax County Park Authority. Green Preserve Protect Play wristbands are available for purchase at the snack bar and the main office for \$2 each. Money raised through wristband sales will help fund scholarships for at-risk youth to attend Park Authority camps and to purchase and preserve the remaining open

space in Fairfax County as parkland. If you purchase a wristband, your name can be added to the tree. Help support the Park Foundation and purchase your wristband today.

Make sure you check out... the newly repainted carousel horses. Every year the carousel is dismantled for repair work and general maintenance. Part of this routine is to give all the horses a fresh coat of paint.

And... the wall on the median on Backlick Road in front of Lynbrook has been repainted. Did you know Lake Accotink Park has adopted the median?

And finally... the marina now has a flagpole.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A JUNIOR STEWARDSHIP CAMPER OR... HOW NOT TO HAVE A TYPICAL SUMMER

Dear Grandma,

I had the most amazing day at camp today. I am attending Junior Stewardship Camp at Lake Accotink Park. Today we tried to answer the question, "What is a watershed?"

The first thing we did was to see a watershed model demonstration and learn about our watershed addresses. Do you know if I live on Flag Run Drive my watershed address is Flag Run, Accotink Creek, Potomac River, Chesapeake Bay? By using the watershed model, I learned that everything on our streets and lawns gets washed into the nearest creek when it rains. Smaller bodies of water flow into larger ones, so a bottle on the curb in front of my house could get all the way to the Chesapeake Bay. That is one of the reasons there is so much trash in Lake Accotink after it

rains. And we learned about the effects of impervious surface (ground cover like asphalt and roofs that cannot absorb water).

After the model demonstration, we went for a nature walk. On our walk we saw some evidence of what we talked about like eroded stream banks. And it was just fun to be outdoors. We also saw a bald eagle flying over the lake. The counselor says he doesn't think they nest in the park, but they do hunt here often. You can't do things like this at an indoor camp.

The rest of the afternoon was fun, too. We did some more experiments and played a game where we pretended to be litter that was being blown around a park.

My favorite activity was the last one. We made rain sticks from paper towel tubes and shared myths and legends about the importance of clean water to many different cultures and societies. I drew a picture of my rain stick for you. When you turn it upside down, it sounds like falling rain.

I can't wait to go back tomorrow. We are going to talk about the Native Americans who used the land that is now Lake Accotink and learn about archaeology. I will send another letter tomorrow.

—Susan

For more info about this camp, please call 703-569-0285. To register, go to www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/accotink/in



CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

Advance registration is required. Please call 703-569-3464 or TTY 703-569-5200.



Can You Canoe?

Saturday June 11, 6-8 pm

Learn the basic mechanics of canoeing with an emphasis on safety and enjoyment. Perfect for beginners.
All children must be accompanied by a registered adult.

\$20 per registrant (must be 8 years +)

Dog Day Afternoon Cruise

Sunday June 12, Sunday July 10, Sunday August 14



Treat your canine companion to a special cruise aboard Lake Accotink Park's pontoon boat.
The cruise will enchant your dog and help relax you.
Boat leaves dock at 4 pm

\$5 per adult, \$3 per child 8-15 (please, no children younger than 8)

Sunset Cruise

Saturday June 18 (16+ only), Saturday July 16, Saturday August 13, Saturday September 10

Admire the sunset and relax as you cruise the beautiful shoreline of Lake Accotink.



You will forget you are only a few miles from the Beltway!
Please call for cruise times.

\$5 per adult, \$3 per child

Father's Day Cruise

Sunday June 19



Spend this special day with Dad at Lake Accotink Park.
Cruise the shoreline while listening to an interpretive history of the park, lake and surrounding area.
Boats leave the dock at 11 am, 1 pm, 3 pm, 5 pm, 6 pm, and 8 pm.

\$3.50 for dads, \$7 other adults, \$4 for children



Nature Night Hike

Friday June 24, Saturday June 25, Friday July 8, Saturday July 9, Friday August 19

Join us for an evening stroll as we try to encounter some of the "nightlife" at Lake Accotink Park.
June and July hikes start at 8:30 pm. August hikes start at 8 pm.

\$5 per adult, \$3 per child 7-15 (please, no child under 7)

Full Moon Cruise

Saturday July 23, Saturday August 20, Saturday September 17



Cruise the waters of Lake Accotink under a beautiful full moon while
learning about the natural and cultural resources that abound at Lake Accotink Park.

Boat leaves dock at 8 pm.

\$5 per participant

(See next page for registration information)

Refund Policy: For full refund, cancellation must be made two weeks in advance of program.
Otherwise, refunds are only issued in the event the program or class is cancelled.



Grandparents Day Cruise

Sunday September 11

Treat the grandparents to a special day at Lake Accotink Park.
Cruise the shoreline while listening to an interpretive history of the park, lake and surrounding area.
Boat leaves the dock at 11 am, 1 pm, 3 pm, 5 pm, 6 pm, and 8 pm.

\$3.50 for grandparents, \$7 for other adults, \$4 for children under 15

Registration Information:

By Phone: Visa or Master Card reservations only. Please call 703-569-0285 or TTY 703-569-5200

By Mail: Send a check made payable to "FCPA" with participant's name, address, telephone number, and program title to:
Lake Accotink Park, 7500 Accotink Park Road, Springfield, Virginia 2215

THANKS FOR ASKING: HOW DO I RENT A BOAT AT LAKE ACCOTINK PARK?

Lake Accotink Park staff receive many questions regarding boat rentals. The park has three types of boats available for the public to rent: canoes, row boats, and pedal boats. Canoes and row boats both rent for \$5 per hour. Pedal boats rent for \$5 per half hour or \$8 per hour.

Canoes and pedal boats each seat three people maximum; row boats can seat up to four passengers. This maximum includes children.

To rent any type of boat, there must be someone 16 or older on the boat at all times and they must present a photo ID- preferably a driver's license. The license must belong to someone who will be on the boat. The driver's license will be kept in the boathouse



Boating is a popular recreational pastime at Lake Accotink Park.

along with the boat rental receipt. Keeping a driver's license allows staff to make certain that someone 16 or older is renting the boat and allows staff to know who is out on the water at all times. This is important for safety reasons.

Also for safety reasons, all boats must be off the water by 7:30 pm during the summer. This means the last row boats and canoes rentals are at 6:30 pm and the last pedal boats are rented at 7 pm. This is so that all boats and passengers can be accounted for before dark.

All passengers under 15 must wear a personal flotation device at all times. Those older, must keep it in their boat with them. The boat house will provide them.

Time spent on the water is a wonderful way to relax and unwind after a busy week. Bring your driver's license and your family or friends and have fun! And, as always, thanks for asking.

Fairfax County Park Authority Lake Accotink Park



7500 Accotink Park Road
Springfield, Virginia 22150

Phone: 703-569-0285

TTY: 703-569-5200

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/accotink/index.htm

Park Management:

Tawny Hammond, Park Manager

Julie Tahan, Assistant Manager

Lee Ann Shenefiel, Operations Manager

Axel Boy, Evening Supervisor

Ed Miller, Grounds Supervisor

For FLAP comments or suggestions,
please email:

Tawny.Hammond@fairfaxcounty.gov



ADA Accommodations: Fairfax County is committed to giving all citizens equal access to recreation and leisure opportunities. In keeping with that policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations are provided to individuals with disabilities in all Park Authority programs, services, and facilities. ADA accommodations include sign interpreters, alternative information formats, program modifications and inclusion support. Contact the ADA Specialist at 703-324-8563 or (TTY) (703)803-3354 for additional information.